

Partnering With Tribes to Conserve Natural Resources in Washington



Yakama Nation uses EQIP funding for forest stand improvement projects.

EQIP Dollars Obligated to Tribes (2004-2011)

Quinault Indian Nation
Total: \$889,055 (2004-2011)

Lummi Tribe
Total: \$8,362 (2006)

Spokane Tribe
Total: \$497,675 (2007-2010)

Colville Confederated Tribes
Total: \$2,888,895 (2004-2011)

Yakama Nation
Total: \$4,897,507 (2004-2011)

Makah Tribe
Total: \$366,811 (2005-2010)

Upper Skagit Tribe
Total: \$57,145 (2005)

Tulalip Tribe
Total: \$49,545 (2005-2006)

Jamestown S'klallam Tribe
Total: \$9,720 (2009)



Total: \$9,664,715
(2004-2011)



In 2010, the Confederated Colville Tribes celebrated the return of salmon and the restoration efforts on Omak Creek.

USDA Program Funding Obligated to Tribes

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Since 2004, NRCS-WA has dedicated 12.5 percent of EQIP funding to tribes in Washington State. Although tribes received funding prior to this, the 12.5 percent allocation began in 2004. The percentage is based on land area owned by tribes in the state. Funding has averaged around \$1.1 to \$1.3 million per year.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Salmon Habitat Initiative (SHI)

In 2004 and 2005, NRCS offered a Salmon Habitat Initiative (SHI) sign-up within the WHIP program. NRCS-WA obligated \$122,463 in SHI funding in 2004. About \$100,000 of this funding was obligated to the Quinault Indian Nation. In 2005, NRCS obligated \$259,136 in SHI funding.

Omak Creek Restoration Projects

In 2010, NRCS obligated a contract with the Colville Tribe for \$449,841. The Mission Falls project on Omak Creek is currently in construction, and is removing rock that blocked the passage after nearby blasting on a railroad project lodged the rock in the creek. Omak Creek was traditionally home to Steelhead fish. Once the rock is removed, the passage will open 90,000 square acres to Steelhead runs, as it includes many smaller tributaries to Omak Creek.

This is just a part of the overall work that has occurred in the Omak watershed over recent years. The work began in the early 80's when NRCS completed a PL-566 watershed plan. Since then, NRCS has utilized EQIP and WHIP program dollars, as well as contributing engineering design work.

In addition, a \$625,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) project is helping remove fish barriers for Spring Chinook Salmon on Omak Creek. NRCS has provided the technical assistance on the project.

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Using EQIP and WHIP funding, the Quinault Indian Nation replaced old culverts along forest roads with new bridges and downstream channels. The new structures make fish passage possible once again.

Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) Removes Fish Passage Barriers with EQIP and WHIP

NRCS has been working with the QIN to remove undersized culverts and replace them with a 35' steel bridge and a 4' by 6' concrete box culvert. These new structures will allow water and debris to more easily flow through the system while making fish passage possible once again. Both EQIP and WHIP funding have been used in these efforts. In addition, the QIN has used EQIP funding to conduct pre-commercial thinning on forestland, decommission forest roads to reduce sediment runoff, and to restore prairies.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

In 2011 the Colville Confederated Tribe was awarded two Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG).

- Colville Tribal Energy Program, \$160,664
- Greenhouse Gas Mitigation, \$1.26 million

Formation of Aquaculture Program

Eighty-eight percent of all west coast shellfish are produced in Washington State. NRCS-WA has entered into a contract with Triangle Associates, Inc. to develop a scope and budget to create an aquaculture/shellfish advisory group in order to explore the creation of an aquaculture program in Washington State. By 2013, NRCS-WA plans to offer conservation practices to aquaculture operators that will help protect this important industry.

Cultural Resources Work with Tribes

NRCS-WA has entered into agreements with tribes for the past several years to help complete our cultural resources workload on and off reservations. Partners include the Yakama, Colville and Kalispel Tribes.

Puget Sound Initiative (PSI) Proposal

The cumulative effects of urbanization, population density, and population growth have put significant pressure on the resources in the Puget Sound Basin. Much of the land that can be treated by NRCS activities is directly adjacent to surface water including rivers, streams, ditches, lakes and wetlands. The Puget Sound Initiative (PSI) proposal, submitted by NRCS in 2011, could provide up to \$50 million in program dollars over the next five years.

Salmon restoration in the Puget Sound is of great concern to northwestern tribes. In a briefing paper submitted to several federal agencies, seven tribes in Washington identified poor water quality and diminishing habitat as a major threat to salmon and the tribes' treaty rights. The PSI includes multiple elements to address salmon recovery efforts.



The Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC) discusses important issues such as aquaculture practices during their monthly meetings.

Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC)

In 2010, the Coeur d'Alene and Colville Tribes expressed interest in forming the Washington Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (WATCAC). Washington NRCS partnered with the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) to help the tribes get started.

WATCAC is an independent group, not a subcommittee of the ATNI or NRCS. In addition to the 29 federally recognized Washington tribes, the WATCAC is open to the three ceded lands tribes: Coeur d'Alene, Nez Perce, and Umatilla.

All tribes are welcome to participate in the monthly WATCAC meetings/teleconferences. Tribes who submit resolutions declaring participation in and appointing representatives to the WATCAC will have voting privileges.

If your tribe is considering participation and/or a resolution, please contact your NRCS tribal liaison:

East of Cascades – Rebecca Toupal
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Upcoming Meetings:

Dec. 13, 2011, Jan. 12-13, 2012
and every 2nd Tuesday thereafter

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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